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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 000327

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/02/23

TAGS: PGOV PREL PTER PHUM KJUS CO

SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES LODGED AGAINST PALACE AIDE, DAS
DIRECTORS IN WIRETAPPING SCANDAL

REF: A) 10 BOGOTA 323; B) 09 BGOTA 3271 AND PREVIOUS

CLASSIFIED BY: Mark A. Wells, Political Counselor; REASON: 1.4(B),
(D)

¶1. (U) In a follow-up to developments concerning the illegal wiretapping scandal reported in Reftel A, on February 22 Inspector General (Procurador) Alejandro Ordóñez announced disciplinary charges against several Colombian government officials. Among the notables, Inspector General Alejandro Ordóñez accused President Uribe's Secretary of the Presidency Bernardo Moreno of abusing his authority by organizing meetings between Administrative Department of Security (DAS, the civilian intelligence agency) officials and the GOC's Financial Intelligence Unit (UIAF) to discuss privileged information related to Ascencio Reyes, a businessman alleged to have irregular financial dealings with members of the Supreme Court. In a public statement, Moreno rejected the Inspector General's allegations and claimed he acted in accordance with the law. Charges were also announced against UIAF Director Mario Aranguren Rincón for instructing his officials to meet with Moreno in the presidential palace ("Casa Narino"). The Inspector General cited three former DAS directors and a deputy director for abuse of authority or failure to comply with orders. Ordóñez formally dropped the inquiry against Presidential Press Secretary Cesar Mauricio Velásquez and Vice Minister of Defense Jorge Eastman, but recommended that the Superior Judicial Council open an investigation against unnamed high-level officials at the Prosecutor General's Office for their purported role in the misuse of the Prosecutor General's judicial intercept program.

¶2. (U) Those subject to disciplinary charges were given 10 days to request an evidentiary hearing to present evidence and call witnesses to prove their innocence. If the Inspector General agrees to hear the evidence, the process could take up to three months before a final sanction is handed down. Possible sanctions include fines to a maximum 15-year suspension from public service.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: The Inspector General's disciplinary process is administrative in nature and separate from the criminal investigations carried out by the Prosecutor General's Office reported in Reftel A. Ordóñez' decision is significant in that it is the first action taken against a Casa de Narino official with regard to the DAS/wiretapping scandal. Secretary of the Presidency Moreno has been a prime suspect in the search for a presidential link to the wiretaps (Reftel B), though we are still unaware of a formal criminal investigation against him.

NICHOLS